

# STRIKE STORIES

**By Sharon Sterling**

Communications Officer  
Customer Relations

**How many hats can I wear in any given day?** This is the question I asked myself the first few hectic days of the MTA strike as the customers echoed, *"Is the strike over yet?."*

September 20 was my first day operating the MTA switchboard (Centrex). I shared this assignment with another colleague and our relief assistants, averaging approximately 700 calls per day. I was prepared with my training manual, headset and a smile on my face, and in the tone of my voice, to assist the customers in any way possible.

Although this is a position in the Customer Relations Department that I supervise, it's completely different on the other side of the fence. I became the responsible person to connect each call to the proper number, to remain calm even when the switchboard is flashing with a call on every line.

As a Centrex rookie, the pressure was minimized by the dialogue between my colleagues and myself. We exchanged ideas and information, particularly to assist with the more challenging situations and irate calls. It was an incredible experience, communicating with people from Europe, reporters, MTA employees, public officials, various businesses and the general public.

In answer to the question at the beginning of this story, I can wear as many hats as it takes to satisfy each and every customer to the best of my abilities. The hat of patience, courtesy, dedication -- whatever it takes to get the job done and achieve customer satisfaction.

[Back to 'Strike Stories'](#)